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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MARCH 12, 2007

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 12, 2007.
Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL

YASAMDA GUNDEM: Gundem daily reappeared on the shelves today as under the following newspaper title: "Yasamda Gundem" (Life's Agenda). (This summary is from March 9 edition.)

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / EKSPRES / BOLGE: Police and anti-riot teams went to Barabaros quarter of Adana upon receiving a tip-off that an unauthorized demonstration would be held there. As the police waited at the entrance of the quarter, children started gathering around the officers, conversation developed between police and children, and the two groups decided to play football as they formed two teams each of which was comprised of nine players. The game ended 2-2.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: Mardin Deputy from AKP, Nihat Eri, who responded questions from opposition parties over why TSK (Turkish Armed Forces) was not undertaking de-mining on the southeastern border and the government was instead preparing to hold tenders for that task, said that TSK actually undertook that task initially, but, at the end of one year of work reportedly decided that it would not continue it. The daily claims that TSK's withdrawal revealed a conflict between the government and the army.

YASAMDA GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Evrensel daily points out that ahead of Newroz celebrations, Ilker Basbug, Land Forces Commander, went to Diyarbakir the other day to issue messages about upcoming Newroz. Basbug reportedly told people that ending the PKK's existence in the northern Iraq and Iraq's territorial integrity were two top priorities for Turkey. Yasamda Gundem daily reported that Basbug told people that they would not allow people to wear clothes or use fabric or material in colors representing Kurdish identity, namely green, yellow and red, and, that using those colors would be deemed a terrorist act. The Yasamda Gundem daily interprets that development as TSK pressuring people from attending DTP-led Newroz celebrations in mass numbers. The daily further reports bitter rivalry between official bodies and DTP-led committee concerning Newroz celebrations in Igdir province. The governor announced that they declared state of mobilization for official celebrations to be participated by more people than DTP's celebrations. DTP Kiziltepe party organization in Mardin will renew its application to hold its celebrations on March 21 because authorities did not grant permission to Newroz committee for March 18. Committees in Van and Mus requested permission from authorities to hold Newroz on March 21. Committees in Hakkari and Bitlis requested permission from authorities for March 17.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: Adana Governor Cahit Kirac, who is assigned to

a new post in Izmir, is paying farewell visits to political parties, to associations, to media organizations, to official bodies and to local figures of Adana.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: Members of the Democratic People's Initiative in Sirnak's Cizre district will hold a protest march against PM Erdogan's visit to the district on March 13.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: Ferhan Turk, DTP Mardin Provincial Chairperson, who was detained along with five other persons as they were making a press announcement to draw attention to Abdullah Ocalan's health condition the other day, has been arraigned and arrested. The other five people have been released.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: People in Diyarbakir will turn off the lights for five minutes every day to protest alleged poisoning of Ocalan, who has been serving lifetime imprisonment at Island Imrali.

SECURITY

YASAMDA GUNDEM: The daily reports that a 160-vehicle military convoy has been dispatched from Diyarbakir's 7th Army Corps Command to Sirnak's border areas. The convoy reportedly includes a generator, water barrels and armored vehicles. Meanwhile, three soldiers and one PKK member died in an ongoing military operation in Sirnak's Mountain Gabar.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: Police in Siirt conducted unannounced raid at houses in some quarters of the province the previous day and detained four people. The people reportedly are being interrogated currently.

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HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Unidentified people hurled a Molotov cocktail at a bus waiting at the traffic lights in Mersin. Six passengers and the driver was able to get out of the bus without being hurt. Material damage on the bus was reported.

CRIME / LAW ENFORCEMENT

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Jandarma teams that searched an intercity passenger bus traveling from Sanliurfa to Istanbul found 8 kilograms of heroin in luggage of three passengers.

ECONOMY

SABAH (GUNEY): Gaziantep businessmen were finally given an appointment date by PM Erdogan for March 20 to discuss the government incentive list that excluded the Gaziantep province. A crowded delegation will go to Ankara to meet Erdogan on March 20. Chairperson of Gaziantep Chamber of Industry said that they were hopeful that a positive outcome would ensue their meeting with the premier.

SABAH (GUNEY): Three women, who received small amount of loans from a microcredit project in Diyarbakir, opened a small business selling "gozleme" pastry. The women, who got successful in the job, are planning to establish chain shops to sell their food product.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

EKSPRES / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / SABAH (GUNEY): The local dailies once again carried on their front pages the light rail project the authorities have not been able to realize for 20 years in Adana.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: A 22-year-old women hung herself and committed suicide in Diyarbakir's Bismil district the previous day.

YASAMDA GUNDEM: The daily reported that March 8 World Women's Day activities such as meetings and panels were still going on

provinces such as Van, Hakkari, Kahrmanmaras, Bursa, Istanbul and Manisa. The dailies claimed that in activities where women hit the streets shouted slogans in support for Abdullah Ocalan.

GREEN